

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medical capsule retrieval device comprising at least one of a detector for detecting a medical capsule discharged from within the human body, and a catch unit for catching the medical capsule.

2. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the catch unit includes one of a magnetic material and a magnet arranged in the medical capsule, and a magnet arranged in the retrieval device.

3. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 2, wherein the magnet arranged in the retrieval device comprises a flexible bar-like handle portion.

4. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the catch unit is a net for retrieving or catching the medical capsule.

5. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 4, wherein the net for retrieving or catching the medical capsule is made of a magnet or a magnetic material.

6. A medical capsule retrieval device according to

claim 1, wherein the detector comprises a metal detector for detecting a metal such as a battery arranged in the medical capsule.

7. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the detector comprises one of a magnetic sensor and a gauss sensor for detecting a magnet arranged in the medical capsule.

8. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the detector comprises a receiver that detects a radio wave signal emitted from the medical capsule.

9. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 8, wherein the detector comprises the receiver and a determining unit for determining the discharging of the medical capsule from within the human body based on a variation in the intensity of the signal received by the receiver.

10. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, further comprising a bag that encloses together the medical capsule and a unit of the medical capsule retrieval device.

11. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device is integrated with a toilet bowl.

12. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 1, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device is attached to a toilet bowl.

13. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 12, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device has a toilet seat configuration.

14. A medical capsule retrieval device comprising a detector for detecting a medical capsule discharged from within the human body, and an alerting unit for alerting to the detection of the medical capsule.

15. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the alerting unit comprises a vibration generator.

16. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the alerting unit comprises a light emitting element including one of an LED, an EL device, and an electric bulb.

17. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the alerting unit comprises a liquid crystal display.

18. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the alerting unit comprises one of a buzzer and a sound generator for generating a melody or a sound.

19. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, further comprising one of a bag and a box for enclosing together the medical capsule and a unit of the medical capsule retrieval device.

20. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device is integrated with a toilet bowl.

21. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 14, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device is attached to a toilet bowl.

22. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 21, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device has a

toilet seat configuration.

23. A medical capsule retrieval device comprising a detector for detecting a medical capsule discharged from within the human body, and/or a catch unit for catching the medical capsule, and a washing unit for washing the discharged medical capsule.

24. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 23, further comprising a closure unit for enclosing the medical capsule, washed by the washing unit, in one of a bag and a box.

25. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 23, wherein the medical capsule retrieval device is integrated with a toilet bowl.

26. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 23, wherein the washing unit comprises a vibration generator that washes soil away from the medical capsule by vibration.

27. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 26, wherein the vibration generator comprises an ultrasonic transducer.

28. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 23, wherein the washing unit comprises an alerting device for alerting to the completion of a washing operation.

29. A retrieval method for retrieving a medical capsule, comprising a step of catching the medical capsule discharged from within the human body using a catch unit.

30. A retrieval method for retrieving a medical capsule according to claim 29, further comprising a step of detecting, with a detector, the medical capsule prior to the catching of the medical capsule by the catch unit or at the same moment the medical capsule is caught by the catch unit.

31. A retrieval method for retrieving a medical capsule according to claim 29, further comprising a step of washing the medical capsule caught by the catch unit using a washing unit.

32. A retrieval method for retrieving a medical capsule, comprising a step of detecting the medical capsule discharged from within the human body using a detector, and a step of alerting to the detection of the medical capsule using an alerting unit.

33. A medical capsule retrieval device, attached to a toilet bowl or a toilet bowl dedicated to a capsule retrieval for use, comprising a medical capsule containing a member including one of a metal and a magnet to which an automatic sensing device responds, the automatic sensing device for sensing the member, and an automatic washing unit and/or an alerting unit.

34. A capsule retrieval and washing device comprising:
a medical capsule containing a metal member, and a retrieval unit with a washing function, attached to a toilet bowl or a toilet bowl dedicated to a capsule retrieval for use, and having a retrieval net and a metal detector, and an alerting unit that automatically alerts to the discharging of the medical capsule, wherein the metal detector automatically detects whether or not a metal is contained in an excrement, and the medical capsule and the retrieval net are automatically washed together when the metal detector responds to the metal.

35. A capsule retrieval and washing method for a capsule retrieval and washing device comprising a medical capsule containing a metal member, and a retrieval unit with a washing function, attached to a toilet bowl or a toilet

bowl dedicated to a capsule retrieval for use, and having a retrieval net and a metal detector, the capsule retrieval and washing method comprising the steps of: automatically detecting whether a metal is contained in an excrement, automatically washing the medical capsule and the retrieval net together if the metal detector detects the presence of a metal in the excrement, and automatically alerting to the discharging of the medical capsule from within the human body.

36. A capsule retrieval and washing device comprising: a medical capsule containing a magnet, and a retrieval unit with a washing function, attached to a toilet bowl dedicated to a capsule retrieval for use or a toilet bowl, and having a retrieval net and a magnetic sensor, and an alerting unit that automatically alerts to the discharging of the medical capsule, wherein the magnetic sensor automatically detects whether or not a magnet is contained in an excrement, and the medical capsule and the retrieval net are automatically washed together when the magnetic sensor responds to the magnet.

37. A capsule retrieval and washing method for a capsule retrieval and washing device comprising a medical capsule containing a magnet, and a retrieval unit with a

washing function, attached to a toilet bowl dedicated to a capsule retrieval for use or a toilet bowl, and having a retrieval net and a magnetic sensor, the capsule retrieval and washing method comprising the steps of: automatically detecting whether the magnet is contained in an excrement, automatically washing the medical capsule and the retrieval net together if the magnetic sensor responds to the presence of the magnet in the excrement, and automatically alerting to the discharging of the medical capsule from within the human body.

38. A medical capsule retrieval device comprising a receiver for receiving a signal emitted from a medical capsule discharged from within the human body.

39. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 38, wherein the signal comprises one of a radio wave and an optical signal.

40. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 39, wherein the signal comprises examination data acquired from the medical capsule.

41. A medical capsule retrieval device according to claim 39, wherein the signal comprises image data.

42. A medical capsule retrieval device comprising a medical capsule containing a signal transmitter, a detector that detects that medical capsule is discharged from within the human body, and a signal receiver that receives a signal from the signal transmitter.

43. A medical capsule retrieval method comprising a step for detecting, with a detector, that a medical capsule containing a signal transmitter is discharged from within the human body, and a step for receiving a signal from the signal transmitter with a signal receiver.